



COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER

FALL 2006/ WINTER 2007

LUCE SEMESTER STUDENTS SAVOR SOUTHERN SOJOURN

By Shawn Nanan '07

On October 31, a group of 18 Dickinsonians embarked on a journey down the Mississippi Watershed, culminating their three-week long voyage in the hurricane ravaged New Orleans, Louisiana. Previously, they had spent the first week of the 2006 LUCE semester conducting fieldwork in the Chesapeake Watershed, and will continue to do so following their return from New Orleans for the remaining nine weeks of their semester.

So, what is the LUCE semester anyway? The LUCE semester is an initiative funded by a generous grant from the Henry Luce foundation. This grant was given in Spring 2004 to Candie Wilderman and Michael Heiman of the Environmental Studies Department, and Lauren Imgrund, Director of the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM).

Together, Wilderman, Heiman and Imgrund decided that the grant from the Henry Luce Foundation will be used to develop a single interdiscipli-



LUCE students & professors at the Blue Moon Saloon and Guest House in Lafayette, LA

nary, integrated course, for the equivalent of a student's normal 4-course load. This would combine classroom activities, community-based fieldwork research, independent study, and extensive travel and immersion in two comparative watershed regions: the Chesapeake Bay and the lower Mississippi River Basin. This course is now known to Dickinsonians as the LUCE semester and will be offered once more in Spring 2007.

One of the main goals of the course is to connect students with affected communities, building on relationships already established through the ALLARM program and by having students do research projects related to the communities' needs. This goal was fulfilled through the student-community interaction in both Mississippi and the still recovering New Orleans.

One of the first steps of the journey was the Mountain Watershed Association (MWA) in western Pennsylvania. Here they learned about the MWA's efforts to help restore areas in the watershed that have been contaminated by abandoned mine drainage. According to Jennifer Bowman '08, "The watershed association follows a two-pronged approach to solving the problem of abandoned mine drainage. First, they use activism as a way to prevent future coal mines from being built in and around their watershed and to help remediate current abandoned mine drainage discharge sites. Second, they plan and help enact restoration plans in contaminated sites."

Another stop during the course of their journey was California, Pa where they met with William Plassio, the

COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER OFFERS NEW STUDENT GRANT

Students interested in field research may find a new benefactor at 239 W. Louther Street. A new grant program has been announced by the Community Studies Steering Committee to help students fund community-based research projects or cover travel expenses to present papers at academic conferences.



Grant proposals will be reviewed twice this spring: proposals are due February 15 and March 15, at least 30 days before needed. Through a grant application process, funds will be provided primarily for travel expenses (transportation, per diem, parking, etc.) and consumable supplies. More information and the download for the application form can be found on the CSC website.

Questions concerning the grants and application process should be directed to Professor Lonna Malmsheimer.

District Mining Manager of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Here, the Dickinsonians learned about the laws that regulate the activities of mining companies and the responsibilities that they face in light of any damages the community might sustain. At the end of their day, Adrian Broderick '08 blogs, (continued on pg. 6)

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AN INTERVIEW WITH MAX LYONGA-SAKO

By Janey Daniels '08

When we think of Africa, we think of poverty, the AIDS epidemic, corrupt governments and civil wars. The last thing that comes to mind is art. As an African woman, I sometimes find it hard to allow myself to see the positive side of the African continent, but nonetheless, I know it's there. Recently I had the privilege of coming face to face with one of these positive sides. It came in the form of Max Lyonga-Sako, dubbed one of the best Cameroonian artists of his generation. He was an artist in residence this fall at Dickinson College.

The Goodyear Gallery recently exhibited Lyonga-Sako's work and I was fortunate enough to interview Mr. Lyonga-Sako, whose personality is as refreshing and genuine as his art. His work focuses on the necessary efforts of building a stronger and more self sufficient Africa through arts and culture. His paintings are vibrant and they represent African people and their rich culture at its best. When confronted with the powerful images of Sako's work, it is hard to imagine that he received no formal artistic training. Today however, he has painted over 6,500 paintings showcased all over Africa, Europe, Australia and the United States.

Mr. Lyonga-Sako was born in Cameroon on June 12th, 1968 in



Secret Life
Acrylic/ mixed media

Tiko, in southwestern Cameroon. His love affair with art started at age five. Sako's father, who raised him with an aunt, did not approve of his son's paintings at all. "I received seven strokes a day from my father for painting, but I wanted to prove him wrong and I wanted to help my family economically". Despite his father's disapproval, Sako remained motivated and stayed true to what he loved doing. Today, Sako names his father as one of his main sources of inspirations.

In addition to proving his worth to his father, Sako sought to capture and portray the lives of his native Bakweri people. When he first started painting, he painted mainly

in the impressionist style. However, after meeting and working with a group of German tourists, he began practicing abstract art, which has now become a dominant part of his work.

When Sako first appeared on the art scene in Cameroon, he painted for a "Cameroonian audience". He believed that it was essential for him to establish himself in his home country before exhibiting anywhere else. When asked why this was so important to him, he responds "because many Africans don't appreciate what their brothers do in art". He gave himself ten years to paint and exhibit in Cameroon, in order to establish a loyal

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fan base. “People have now started to build an appreciation of art.” Secondly, he wanted to establish himself internationally in order to portray positive images of African culture.

Within his native Cameroon, the sale of Mr. Lyonga-Sako's work has raised a substantial amount of money for children with HIV/AIDS.

Sako finds motivation in everything. “I have a unique feeling inside me that is a skill and confidence of hope that is inspired by my wife and kids. There are so many people present in my life who push me and keep me motivated. **I never think negatively.** My emotions are on my paintings and any negative feelings about the world are painted positively. Like Jesus Christ on the cross, as an artist I have to carry my cross to create more.”

Through exhibiting his art, Sako

finds inspiration to paint more, based on reactions he receives from those fortunate enough to experience his work. He also finds exhibiting important because he wants to share his ideas and talent with the world and to simply show the art.

Another important factor for Sako is to make money, but “it was never my main reason for wanting to exhibit.” Within his native Cameroon, the sale of Mr. Lyonga-Sako's work has raised a substantial amount of money for children with HIV/AIDS. In addition, he is also the founder of a contemporary arts facility at the Franco-Cameroonian Alliance in Buea. One of Mr. Lyonga-Sako's greatest joys is leading workshops for children, especially underprivileged kids in Cameroon. He speaks fondly and with great hope about the kids in his workshops; he believes in them and has no doubt that they have great potential that will take them in a direction that will change their lives forever.

While in Carlisle, Mr. Lyonga-Sako has worked with the children from the Hope Station after-school program. He also taught a Master Class to painting and drawing students in the Art and Art History department, while maintaining an active studio in the Goodyear Building. No doubt, Dickinson art students benefited greatly from Mr. Lyonga-Sako's visit. I know I certainly did.

Meeting Mr. Lyonga-Sako has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my Dickinson career. Seldom am I surrounded by such genuine sincerity and optimism about the world and everything and everyone in it. There were times during the interview where I felt like I had to pinch myself to make sure that this man was for real, and he was. After this interview I felt an appreciation of art that I haven't felt in a long time. His art is real, personal, familial and filled with humanity and humility. **CSC**



PROFESSOR FARRELL'S

Fieldwork on Fat

By Janey Daniels '08

Over the centuries society's perception of beauty has changed dramatically. Body image is something that many people are even more concerned with than the important issues of genocide in the Sudan or the oppression of women in Afghanistan. An example is the recent phenomena of women in South Africa becoming increasingly thinner and more "western" looking, since the country's democracy in 1994. Historically, South Africa is a nation that valued "real women"; women with curves were seen as beautiful and healthy and what mattered was what was on the inside. However, as the saying goes, "all good things must come to an end"



Women and men all over the world have become increasingly obsessed with their body image. In America, body image is used to judge people's class, education and sometimes even self control.

In 2000, Amy E. Farrell, Associate Professor of American Studies and Women's Studies, undertook a research project that focuses on history of fatness and the culture of weight loss in the United States. Her discoveries and ideas are both original and fascinating. She links her results to things that we, as a society, would not normally associate with body image. I recently had the privilege of spending some time with Professor Farrell, talking to her about her work.

Professor Farrell started her interest in this topic when she started reading women's studies literature and noticed the constant rhetoric on fat. She explains the idea of fat was being linked to social hierarchies; who is 'civilized,' as well as to racial stereotypes. When linking fat to race, she explains the evolution of whiteness being associated with thinness. Over the years, being thin has been associated with being white, while being fat or voluptuous were/are usually associated with people of color. In her research she talks about the ideal of the 'civilized' body, which is that of the white, upper class male.

Professor Farrell also addresses fat issues in contemporary popular culture. To illustrate this point, she uses Oprah Winfrey as an example.

Winfrey is one of the most famous women in the world and one of the wealthiest. She has struggled with her weight tremendously over the years and it seems that the more weight she loses the more obsessed she becomes with losing even more. This seems to be a common trend among celebrity men and women. Something else that has



Oprah illustrates her 67 lbs. weight loss on Optifast using a wagon of animal fat in 1988.

become even more common in popular culture is gastric bypass surgery, which decreases the size of the stomach so that one may feel satisfied after eating only very small portions. It has become a method used for speedy weight loss. The problem with popular culture is that it focuses on surgery as a solution to the problems associated with obesity, but ignores other options such as exercise and healthy eating habits.

In doing her research, Professor Farrell also came across a group called fat activists. They are a group of people considered to be fat and they 'come out' as being fat and loving their bodies, as well as challenging medicine by arguing that size does not necessarily determine how healthy you are. Among

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these activist groups, Professor Farrell came across Marilyn Wann, author of “Fat? So!” who, she considers to be at the forefront of Fat Activism. Wann is responsible for leading numerous workshops on diversity and fat.



Source: amazon.com

I asked Professor Farrell how perception of body image and fat has changed over time, if at all. According to Professor Farrell, perceptions of body image changed starting in the 1890s and were firmly in place by the 1920s, also known as the ‘flapper era.’ Dresses became shorter and women wrapped their bodies to resemble a sort of boy-like shape. Prior to this era, men associated women’s body type with their class and fertility capabilities. A fuller shaped woman represented health and fertility. Fuller shaped men symbolized high economic status. Then new social anxiety about what being fat meant came into play, and society’s perception changed.

Something that I thought was interesting was Professor Farrell’s perspective on the role convenience

plays in modern life. As technology develops, things become easier. For example, why walk when you can drive or why cook a healthy meal when McDonald’s is around every corner? We ignore these things on a daily basis. I remember as a child I was allowed to run free outside and play to my heart’s content, but these days parents are afraid to let their children out of the house due to fear of violence and other unknown dangers. This means children remain confined and can no longer run free. Junk food is everywhere and we consume it everyday. It exists, because we forgot how to simply say NO.

We have lost integrated exercise in our lives, yet we judge and sometimes ostracize fat people. There is an assumption that people who are fat, don’t exercise and they eat excessively, yet we ignore the

fact that genetically, some body types are more sensitive to weight gain than others. A thin body means being in control and a fat body means you are out of control.

In conclusion, I think the prejudices about fat have been with us a long time. I think that Professor Farrell made an excellent decision when she chose to pursue this project. Her ideas are thought provoking. In a nutshell, she knows what she is talking about.

Her book entitled “*Fat Shame: A cultural study of stigma, weight loss and the fat acceptance movement*” will be published in late 2007/ 2008. I highly recommend that people of all body sizes read this book as I have no doubt that it will be informative, educational, provocative and new.

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Professor Amy Farrell explores the history of fat stigma by examining comics and other forms of popular culture, such as this postcard from the first half of the twentieth century that makes fun of the fat woman.

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WINTERIM IN VENEZUELA

By Frank Peralta '07

This coming spring, the winterim course in Venezuela will provide a group of Dickinson students both the historical background and a hands-on exposure to the new model of "participatory democracy, endogenous development, and regional integration" that is developing in Venezuela today.

Twenty students, with the guidance

and human rights organizations. These interviews will provide students with the information necessary to conduct service-learning projects, which is one of the requirements of the course.

The service-learning component will take place during the January term. It will entail visits to various sites in the country, interaction with people, listening to lectures, and having group discussions. During the afternoons, students will work at particular sites to establish relationships

involve working in fields, and gardens that provide citizens the opportunity to become less reliant on big business. Other projects include a literacy project with the elderly, working with the rural schools, the Almas de las Casas Project, and possibly working with the Women's Cooperative Bakery and a recycling project.

The students will focus on social issues such as poverty, education, and empowerment. The course addresses various meanings of democracy, "who wins or who loses under the current system in Venezuela?" and "what does stability mean?" according to Professor Susan Rose. This trip abroad will also address some of the underlying assumptions we, as Americans, have when examining different societies such as Venezuela, and how these assumptions might affect our study.

"Who wins or who loses under the current system in Venezuela?"



of three faculty members, Professors Sinan Koont, Susan Rose, and Lonna Malmshemer, will be conducting interviews with government officials, Venezuelan academics, political party leaders, trade unionists, journalists,

within the community. The students will be able to focus on five different service-learning experiences. For example, an organic farming and sustainable development focus, which will

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THE LUCE SEMESTER

(Continued from page one)

"As I reflect on our day tramping through very wet and muddy fields and streams, it is clear that we have bigger problems than dirty shoes and wet clothing. The people affected by long-wall mining do not deserve the troubles they are forced to face. Even if full compensation for damages is given, there is a tremendous amount of time, energy, anger, and frustration invested in trying to protect mining communities."

Next the LUCER's studied mountaintop removal as they traveled from Charleston, WV to Whitesville, WV. In Whitesville they visited the Coal River Mountain Watch office where they learned how coal mining negatively affects the community. Other stops on the journey to New Orleans

included visits to the Mississippi Delta and the Delta Blues Museum, and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) in Cocodrie, La.

They would learn about the Houma community (an indigenous tribe given recognition by The Federal government) and their struggles with racism and the oil industry; and visit Trinity Island and learn of restoration efforts of barrier islands in the Gulf region.

During this time, they also got to visit Terrebonne Bay to conduct water quality sampling and to learn of some of the species that live in the Bay water. Here they were able to apply their classroom knowledge to practical experience.

They also heard lectures about oyster fisheries and coastal wetland restoration in Louisiana, by Dr. Earl Melancon, Department of Biological Sci-

ences at Nicholls State University, and learned about what it will take to create a sustainable coastal Louisiana.

In light of her experiences, Katie Fox commented, "As each day passes it becomes increasingly clear that there is no simple way of saving Louisiana's disappearing coast. Each day we learn about new issues, problems, and plans and about all the complex perspectives, opinions, and politics behind the science. There are many varied ideas for saving the coast and it is exceedingly difficult to determine which are the most effective and promising projects for protection and restoration."

The LUCE crew then headed for Lafayette, La. where they lodged at the Blue Moon Hostel. On their first outing, they visited the currently retired but first ever, submersible drilling rig ever built; the Mr. Charlie Oil Rig.

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The LUCE crew also went on swamp tours of the Bayou Sorell and was saddened to learn of how oil companies have contaminated the swamp area by dumping their waste there. Also, they visited the Cypress forests and learned of the ill-effects of the logging industry on the longevity of the forest.

On their last day in Lafayette, La. the LUCE crew visited the Lafayette National Wetlands Research Center and met with Ed Landgraf (Shell Pipeline). "This was my favorite part of the day because it finally gave us one company's perspective on the land loss that is attributed to their operations. More than 36,000 miles of pipelines that carry oil and natural gas crisscross the wetlands. The oil and gas companies need the protection of the marsh as much as any other Louisiana resident," blogs Elly Shrang.

The next stop in their voyage brought them to their final destination: New Orleans. They set up shop in Baton Rouge – a city where many New Orleans residents sought refuge in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.



The LUCE crew met with students from Xavier and Dillard University to discuss the possibility of their future involvement with the Luce program. Two students, Carissa Williams and Aaliyah Brown shared their experiences of hurricane Katrina.

Bob Landry of the United Steel Workers discussed the difficulties the union faces in the fight for workers' rights. They also met with Darryl

Malek-Wiley of the Sierra Club, who described the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet as a major factor in the flooding of New Orleans, and Willie Fontenot who provided insight of the major problems in New Orleans and the efforts to rebuild.

As one of their last activities in New Orleans, the LUCE crew met with Ann Yoachim, a Dickinson alumna who is working as the Assistant Director of the Loyola Center for Environmental Communications. Through her preparations, they met with three local communities who were working with the recovery and rebuilding efforts. As a closing activity, all students met on the levee of the Mississippi river to share their varying perceptions.

This is the second year that the LUCE semester has been a part of the Environmental Studies Department's curriculum. Since its inception, it has never failed to touch the students that have participated. It holds true to its goals of developing an understanding of the deep connections between natural resources and humans from multiple perspectives within an immersion experience while training students on ecosystem analysis field techniques via hands-on experience. It also exposes the students to the cultural contexts in which environmental problems are created and in which solutions are conceived and implemented. Students were also able to engage in meaningful, long-term community projects with the community members themselves.

The impact on Dickinsonians is self-evident in Elly Shrang's weblog comment, "I feel like I have an obligation now to tell other people about what is happening to our country and to try to make a difference like all of the activists, organizers, and scientists who took time to talk to us." Our mission to Engage the World" has yet again been fulfilled. **CSC**

The Fifth Annual PENNSYLVANIA MEDICAL HUMANITIES CONSORTIUM AT DICKINSON



The Community Studies Center will be the host for this year's Pennsylvania Medical Humanities Consortium meeting on May 22–May 23, 2007. A Call for Papers has been issued for papers, panels and alternative presentations about this year's theme, "*Health, Medicine and Inequality.*"

Established in 2003, the goal of the consortium is to gather once a year to exchange research and teaching ideas in the fields of medicine, arts and the humanities. The meeting is designed around panels and workshops to maximize lively conversation and the open exchange of ideas.



Dr. J. Larry Brown, the nation's leading scholarly authority on domestic hunger will be the keynote speaker. He directs the National Center on Hunger and Poverty, and serves on the faculty of the Harvard School of Public Health.

For information about this spring's event; details for submitting panels, presentations and/or papers, registration or arranging accommodations, visit the PMHC website link at **CSC**.



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